



Food & Fitness

June 2000

June is Cancer in the Sun Week

Everyone is at risk for skin cancer, however, most skin cancers could be prevented by protecting ourselves from the sun's rays. Skin cancer strikes over 600,000 Americans each year. Fortunately, this form of cancer is the most easily detectable, curable, and preventable.

3 main types of skin cancer

- Basal Cell Carcinoma** - is most common. It almost never spreads (metastasizes) to other vital organs, but should be removed since it will get bigger and can affect nearby areas.
- Squamous Cell Carcinoma** - is less common but is potentially more harmful because it can grow quickly and spread to other organs.
- Malignant Melanoma** - is the deadliest form of skin cancer. It is especially hard to stop once it has spread to other parts of the body but it can be readily treated in its earliest stages.

Self Examination

Finding any cancer early and treating it quickly is important, especially melanoma. Self-examination of your skin every three months, along with a yearly skin exam by a doctor, is the best way to detect the early warning signs of the three main types of skin cancer. Look for a new growth or any skin change. Be alert to irregularities in shape, edges, color and size of spots (freckles, birthmarks, moles) on your skin.

You'll need a bright light, a full-length mirror, a hand mirror, two chairs or stools and a blow dryer.

1. Examine head and face, using one or both mirrors. Use the blow dryer to inspect your scalp.
2. Check hands, including nails. In full-length mirror, examine elbows, arms and underarms.
3. Focus on neck, chest and torso. Women: check under breasts.
4. With back to the mirror, use hand mirror to inspect back of neck, shoulders, upper arms, back, buttocks and legs.
5. Sitting down, check legs and feet, including soles, heels, and nails. Use hand mirror to examine genitals.

Sun Safety

More than 90% of all skin cancers are the result of exposure to the ultraviolet radiation of the sun. Here are some tips for preventing skin cancer:

1. Do not sunbathe.
2. Plan your activities to avoid the hours of 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., when the sun's rays are strongest.
3. Cover up! Wear clothing to protect skin as much as possible.
4. Teach your children good sun protection habits at an early age: the damage that leads to adult skin cancers starts in childhood. 80% of a lifetime's sun exposure is experienced before the age of 18.
5. Always use a sunscreen with a Sun Protection Factor (SPF) of 15 or greater. Apply it evenly and often.
6. Don't use sunlamps or tanning booths. A tan from these methods won't protect you in the sun when you go on a vacation. They damage the skin, and don't help or protect you.
7. Examine your skin, head to toe, at least once every three months.



It's never too late to protect your skin! Even if you've tanned or burned before, you can begin protecting your skin today by following the above recommendations.

National Men's Health Week

Prostate Cancer

Prostate cancer is now the most common type of cancer and the second-highest cause of cancer deaths in men. Prostate cancer affects 1 in every 9 men and about 16 percent of American men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer during their lifetime. But prostate cancer doesn't have to be life threatening. With early detection, the chances for recovery are high.

R I S K F A C T O R S

A risk factor is something that increases a person's chances of getting cancer. Here are the risk factors for prostate cancer:

- Age** - growing older increases a man's risk for getting prostate cancer. Men aged 50 and over are at greatest risk.
- Race** - African American men have a higher incidence of prostate cancer than Caucasian men.
- Family History** - risk increases for men whose father or brothers (1st degree relative) have prostate cancer. The risk is more than 10 times higher for a man who has three relatives with the disease. Risk may also be increased for men whose female relatives have breast cancer.
- Diet** - A high fat diet may stimulate prostate growth.

S Y M P T O M S

Most men with prostate cancer have no obvious symptoms. When symptoms finally appear, they are similar to those caused by prostate enlargement or infections. The symptoms include:

- difficulty starting or holding back urine,
- inability to urinate,
- weak or interrupted flow,
- frequent urge to urinate, especially during the night,
- painful or burning urination,
- blood in the urine,
- frequent pain or stiffness in the lower back, hips, or upper thighs (prostate cancer tends to spread to the bone, and bone pain, especially in the back, can be a symptom).

Early Detection

You may not think that you need to be examined because you're young and feel fine, but you can develop prostate cancer as early as age 40. You may not have symptoms, or you may be so used to symptoms, like having to urinate frequently at night, that they seem normal. You might also feel uncomfortable discussing this personal subject with your doctor. But it is important to discuss having an annual prostate screening exam after age 40 if you are at high risk for the disease. If you are not at high risk, it is recommended that you start receiving an annual prostate exam after age 50.

Annual testing is the best way to find prostate cancer early, which may help save your life. And if cancer is caught early on, before it has spread beyond the prostate, your chances for living a normal life are excellent.